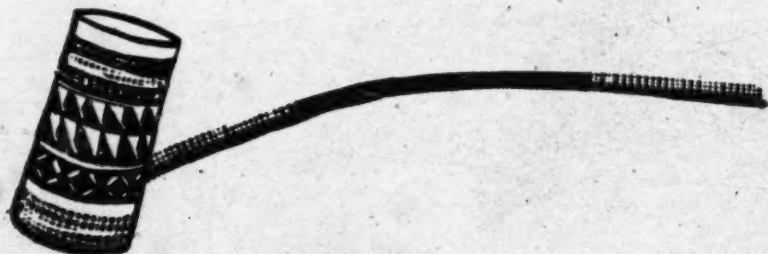


## POLITICS

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have come under the Burman official and formed a single unit in his jurisdiction, and on the whole have received just treatment. In some cases, a Karen of standing and influence has been chosen as the headman and has had Burmese villages under his control. In this way Karens have risen to power over those who formerly looked down upon them. 621 177

There has usually been a strong national self-consciousness among the Karens. They long for the freedom which they feel would come if they had a Karen king and were out from under the rule of the Burmese and even, in a small degree, of the British. The "prophets" who have led various revival movements among them have had something of a combined political and spiritual freedom in mind although the former has been kept more or less camouflaged. One of those, who seemed to be a sort of Quisling before the Japanese invasion, was talking about the coming of a Karen king to take over the country. But those who heeded him were only a small handful of the more primitive Karens in the Toungoo Hills and those in some of the more remote parts of the Irrawaddy Delta. 186 668 ●



Pipe

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177 professions. Perhaps the most prominent Karen, the Hon. Dr. San  
 873 C. Po, is a physician, graduate of an American medical college, who  
 463 has served for several years in the Legislative Council of the  
 province of Burma, being the first member of his race to be thus  
 honored.

177 With the progress of Christianity and education has come liter-  
 212 ature. As soon as the Karen language had been reduced to writing,  
 the missionaries began to prepare books for the people. In this  
 work they have been assisted by a number of educated Karens.  
 Thus far these translators have provided in the vernacular the  
 Bible, a few plays of Shakespeare, *Pilgrim's Progress*, the *Arabian*  
*Nights*, and short stories and pamphlets in large number. Dr.  
 Wade, with the aid of Saw Kau Too, has compiled *The Karen The-*  
*saurus*, a vernacular encyclopedic dictionary of language and cus-  
 toms in four volumes, which is a work of great value. Christian  
 literature, in the form of commentaries and text-books of various  
 kinds, has been largely supplied by Dr. E. B. Cross, Dr. D. A. W.  
 Smith, and the Rev. T. Than Bya, D.D. An admirable collection of  
 hymns has been brought together, including both some of the Eng-  
 lish favorites and some original hymns composed by Karens as well  
 as by missionaries. The largest number in the collection by one  
 writer is by Mrs. J. H. Vinton. Of the seven or eight vernacular  
 newspapers and monthly periodicals all but one or two are under  
 native management. The "*Dawkula*" (*Karen National News*) is a  
 biweekly, the others being monthlies, of which the *Karen Morning*  
*Star*, founded by Dr. Francis Mason at Tavoy in 1841, has had a  
 continuous existence and is the oldest vernacular periodical in  
 southeastern Asia.

The American Baptist Mission Press at Rangoon has been from  
 its establishment the headquarters for Karen printing. Karen type  
 were first manufactured here and the first pages struck off in the  
 new characters. Here also the linotype machine has been adapted  
 to vernacular use. Other Karen presses are in operation at Bassein  
 and Toungoo.

668 At the time of the Third Burmese War (1885), when the Karen  
 177 were suffering from brigandage which threatened to devastate the  
 whole country, certain leaders of the race began a movement to  
 develop a national spirit among the people, who had always been  
 clannish and provincial. Some progress was made immediately  
 [702] after the war through the formation of Karen levies, without which  
 the province could scarcely have been brought back to a state of

THE PROGRESS OF THE KAREN RACE

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good order. At length the Karen National Association ("Daw k' lu," meaning literally "the whole race") was organized. All the districts in which the Karen live were represented at its first meet-



REV. THERA MAUNG YIN, OF BASSIN

He held the rank of honorary havildar in the Karen battalion of the Burma Rifles, 1917-1920, and was most highly commended by his commanding officers for his wholesome influence as a religious teacher.

ing, a few non-Christians attending, although the leaders were Christians. The aim of the association was simply to promote the economic and educational interests of the people, as well as to plan for their representation at public functions, such as on the occasion of viceregal visits. Funds have been raised for these purposes, but,

668 unfortunately, through mismanagement, have not proved to be per-  
177 manent. During the World War the association served as a mouth-  
piece for the expression of the loyalty of the race and did some  
active work in recruiting. It furthered the sending of deputations  
to meet the Montague Commission and later sent a rather ill-  
advised delegation to England to promote the national interests,  
which have been so much emphasized as a result of the world con-  
flict.

668 The military activities of the Karen have been largely confined  
in the past to village raids. There have been times when there  
was a prospect that a real leader might arise to unite a large group  
of villages into a kind of state and carry on warfare on a large  
scale. One such attempt was made by a Karen, of Martaban or  
Shwegyin, who assumed the Burmese title of "Nün Laung" or  
Coming Prince—a favorite title with rebellious members of the  
Burmese court who tried to usurp the throne. This adventurer  
organized a religio-political movement among his compatriots  
throughout the region from Siam to Bassein. They expected him to  
fulfil a prophecy to the effect that the Karen would drive out the  
foreigners and establish a new dynasty at Pegu. However, this  
rebellion was soon put down and its leaders were driven into Kar-  
enni, where they disappeared.<sup>9</sup>

701 The Karen levies, which did so much to re-establish peace  
throughout the province of Burma after the Third Burmese War,  
and, for the most part under their missionaries as officers and with  
but little military organization, captured some of the dacoit lead-  
ers after scattering their followers, rendered a service deserving  
of more credit than it received at the time. Local and racial feeling  
was still running too high, and official circles did not always under-  
stand the situation fully.<sup>10</sup>

Soon after these services, which were rendered by most of the  
Karens gratuitously and with arms which they had paid for, ma-  
licious rumors were circulated that these men were of doubtful  
loyalty. The result was that they were divested of their arms  
and given no compensation whatever. It still remained true, how-  
ever, that they had saved their homes, protected the honor of their

<sup>9</sup> *British Burma Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 498; *Imperial Gazetteer, Burma*, Vol. I, p. 335; *Lieut. Gen. A. Fyfe*, C. B. I., *Burma, Past and Present*, Vol. I, Ch. 2, quoted in an article entitled "The Karens" in the *Burmesque Gazette* of June 4, 1917.

<sup>10</sup> For an account of the capture of Bo Hlino, the notorious dacoit, in Toungoo, see the closing chapters of *Cumming's In the Shadow of the Pagoda*. These chapters are quoted in *Dr. Barker's See Tha*, pp. 248-274. The murderers of Mr. Barker, the deputy commissioner of Prome, were apprehended by the Karen levy in that district.